

In addition to the general histories of China were many studies of special periods, persons, and phases of the past. Antiquarians and their collections and publications were numerous. There were compiled some of the earliest of the local topographies and histories, eventually a voluminous section of Chinese literature. Collections of extracts from the literature of the past were made, many critical essays written on the works of earlier authors, records prepared of the rites and customs of the court, and facts supplementary to the official historical records gathered. To the close of the Sung and the opening years of the Mongol dynasty belongs Ma Tuan-lin, who, taking as a basis a work of the T'ang dynasty, Tu Yu's *Tung Tien*, collected the *Wen Hsien Tung K'ao*, a compilation which contained a vast amount of information on government and related subjects. With true historic sense, Sung scholars also wrote many essays on contemporary events, valuable source material for later devotees of Clio. The Sung dynasty witnessed, too, an expansion in the *lei shu*—collections of extracts from earlier works and often translated, although not with entire accuracy, as encyclopaedias. Their beginnings date from hundreds of years before the Sung, but, with their penchant for the past, the Sung scholars compiled a number of them, some relatively short and on restricted groups of topics, and others of them longer than any which had yet appeared. Probably the most famous was the *T'ai P'ing Yii Lan*, prepared under imperial direction, comprising more than a thousand books and quoting from nearly seventeen hundred works.

To this zeal of Sung scholars for the past later generations have owed the preservation of much material which otherwise

would have been lost. The Sung savants were not without serious defects and their inaccuracies often misled their successors in subsequent dynasties. Yet they were not uncritical of their historical source-material. Some doubted the authenticity of the *Chou Li*, others accepted only three of the Five Classics, another regarded the appendices to the *I Ching* as late interpolations, and Chu Hsi rejected the prefaces to *tiie'Shih Ching* and threw doubt on the so-called "ancient text" of the *Shu Ching*, in later centuries conclusively proved to be a forgery.

Even poetry showed the effect of regard for the past and much of it was more closely bound to convention than that of the T'ang.